(b) With the disinvestment of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) and management control with the strategic partner, VSNL is a private company with Government shareholding reduced to 26%. The settlement with telecom carriers after the exchange of traffic accounts and their reconciliation takes significant amount of time. VSNL has been in constant touch with Worldcom officials at multiple levels and monitoring the situation. As per VSNL the Worldcom has started overserving certain payment schedule. The receivables from Worldcom on account of traffic upto March 31, 2002 are substantially cleared.

Poor performance of postal services

904. SHRI ABANI ROY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the postal services in the country has not been found to be upto the mark and Government itself have expressed concern over its poor performance;

(b) if so, the details therefor;

(c) the steps Government propose to take to remove bottlenecks in their smooth running;

(d) whether any efforts have been made to compete with private courier service operators and to upgrade postal services; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) The postal services in the country have been generally satisfactory except the occasional complaints received from the members of public. Such complaints are immediately got enquired into. Besides resolving the grievance, bottlenecks if any found, are also removed.

(b) As per the results of the All India Live Mail Survey conducted in April 2001, 90.3% of unregistered mail and 88.1% of Registered Mails in the urban area was delivered within norms. Similarly, 89.1% and 90.4% of unregistered and registered mails respectively was delivered within norms in rural areas.

(i) The receipt of complaints for various essential services has also shown a declining trend as would be clear from the following:

Year	Opening Balance	Receipt	Settled	Pendency	Total Traffic in crores
1998-99	80266	813063	827447	65882	1576.65
1999-2000	65882	814260	820783	59379	1578.15
2000-2001	59379	787601	788632	58348	1432.60

(ii) Close monitoring of the quality of services is done making all out efforts for improvement by more effective management and using latest technology.

(c) Improvement in the postal services in the country is an ongoing process. Some of the other steps taken to improve the quality of service are as under:—

(i) To speed up the mail transmission, new mail offices and transit sections have been opened and the services of private airlines also utilised.

(ii) Segmentation of mails into various channels like Metro, Rajdhani, Green Channel and Patrika Channel for faster transmission and speedy delivery.

(iii) Deployment of adequate manpower in the expanding conglomeration for rationalization of delivery.

(iv) Educating customers to install mailboxes on the ground floor of the multistoreyed buildings.

(v) For easy dissemination of information, opening of Information and Facilitation Counters and setting up of Computerised Customer Care Centres at 230 District Headquarters.

(vi) Installation of multi-purpose counter machine in 1766 post offices to provide multiple services in a single counter. Over 12 crores transaction are transacted per annum.

(vii) Installation of 150 V. SATs for speedy transmission of money orders.

(viii) Introduction of a new scheme Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendra Yojana as a third tier of postal operations for expansion in postal network in the rural areas.

(ix) Release of Citizen's Charter on 12.7.2001 as a part of providing an open, responsive, transparent administration to citizen's of India.

(d) and (e) To meet the challenge from the Private Courier, number of steps have been taken to strengthen the Speed Post Service:

(i) Its network has been expanded on a two tier basis by opening of 717 States Speed Post Centres at muffusil town and district headquarters.

(ii) Linking 120 major cities and towns on Nation net-work.

(iii) Restructuring of delivery system by creating nodal offices with dedicated delivery staff and its machanization.

(iv) Computerisation of booking and delivery offices for booking Speed Post/Express Post.

(v) Launching speednet to facilitate public to ascertain the position of their speed post articles through internet.

(vi) Providing Free Pick up facilities from the customers premises.

Cellphone Telephony

905. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have proposed to start Cellphone Telephony in Jammu and Kashmir and the North-Eastern Region in the larger interest of integrating these regions with the rest of the country; and

(b) if so, the reasons for giving up the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Sir, the Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS) is operational, at present in Guwahati and Shillong. Further expansion or fresh start of CMTS is not permitted, at present, by Private Operators as well as Bharat